SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER 2021

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by ..... [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans and English at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively on HF and various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed on Echolink by Johan, ZS6JPL. The audio bulletins can be downloaded from the League website at http://www.sarl.org.za while the text bulletin can be downloaded from https://sarlnewsbulletin.wordpress.com/. To join the MailChimp bulletin mailing list, send an e-mail to the SARL Secretary.

In the news today:

THE SARL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

THE WEST RAND CHALLENGE

and

OBSERVATIONS OF OVER-THE-HORIZON RADAR INTERFERENCE ON AMATEUR BANDS

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

We begin this bulletin with the news of a silent key.

It is with deep regret that we announce that the key of John Crampton ZS5JG from Antronic went silent on Wednesday 15 December 2021. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

PAUSE

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

THE SARL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

As we approach the Festive Season and 2021 draws to a close, I am sure we all experienced a year that turned out much differently than anybody could have envisaged. However, it is the time of the year to take that well deserved break and devote some time to our families and friends. When the pandemic brought our world to a standstill and forced us to keep our distance from family, friends and colleagues as most of us worked from home, we as radio amateurs did what we do best and became creative.

Our biggest challenges were the AGM in April and to continue with the RAE classes, including the examination sessions. As mentioned, the creativity we noted from individuals and Clubs ensured that networks and platforms were established to continue with the necessary training. The RAE manager and invigilators once again did what they do best and ensured that the RAE took

place in April and October this year. We had an excellent number of newcomers that attended online courses and successfully wrote the RAE.

Our online AGM earlier in the year as well as the various online workshops that we presented were well attended and appreciated. I, however, miss the synergy of being in a hall together with fellow amateurs and enjoy the opportunity to shake hands, discuss interesting topics and learn from each other. Although we are able to gather in limited numbers, many of us are uneasy to do so and the reality is that it will definitely take much longer before this is possible again.

As you know, the SARL is not only a small group of individuals on Council, but involves all our members, including our affiliated Clubs, to ensure that we represent the radio amateur service in the country. Without all the individuals, volunteers and clubs, the League would never have existed, and cannot continue to exist. Allow me to thank you all for the hard work and commitment over the past year; it is most sincerely appreciated. In the end, it is all about the well-known "Ham Spirit" and combined strength that makes us unique and successful.

This time of the year provides for some good opportunities to enjoy amateur radio activities as well as a good time to take stock and to plan something different for the new year. Make use of the time to have fun in your shack completing that project in the cupboard, work some DX or learn a new mode or skill.

I am looking forward to our members' continued support and commitment in 2022, as together, we strive to develop and advance the amateur radio service into the future. Our challenges to protect the allocated radio amateur spectrum, licencing conditions, and to preserve our rich history, are a never-ending effort and without your support, it will not be possible.

On behalf of Council and myself, we wish you and your families an enjoyable and happy holiday season and a New Year filled with peace, joy and prosperity.

THE 2021 ARRL HANDBOOK AND ANTENNA BOOK

A limited supply of these two sought after handbooks are available. Full details and order form can be found on www.amateurradio.org.za. Treat yourself this Christmas.

THE WEST RAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB PUSHES THE SARL NEXT GENERATION BEACON FUND TO R31 400

A one-thousand-rand donation from the West Rand Amateur Radio Club has increased the SARL Next Generation Beacon fund to R31 400. The West Rand Club is challenging all Clubs country-wide to equal or better their contribution towards the project. The Club believes that the Next Generation Beacon Project is of significant importance for propagation research and a driver to attract interest in long distance VHF and UHF communication.

The fund is administered by AMSAT SA. Contributions can be made by credit card, so visit www.amsatsa.org.za and click on the R50, R250 or R1 000 pay button. Contributions can also be made by EFT to AMSATSA ABSA account no 408 982 6281. Send proof of payment to admin@amsatsa.org.za

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THE SARL OFFICE CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Office at the National Amateur Radio Centre closed on Wednesday 15 December for the Christmas holiday period. The office will open on Monday morning 17 January 2022.

OBSERVATIONS OF OVER-THE-HORIZON RADAR INTERFERENCE ON AMATEUR BANDS TOP ALL OTHERS

The volume of reports of over-the-horizon (OTH) radar interference from observers working with the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Region 1 Monitoring System (IARUMS) dwarfs that of all other interference sources, the November IARUMS newsletter reports. Nearly 800 OTH radars were observed during November alone and the total number of reports for the year is more than 4 500 although that number likely includes multiple reports of the same OTH radar systems.

While the intruder watcher is focused on IARU Region 1, much of the major interference it recounts can affect the amateur bands in the world's other two IARU regions. IARUMS has tracked most OTH radar signals to sites in Russia and China, but a recent report indicated that India has an OTH radar system in the works. IARUMS is calling the system "of concern," although it is not known what frequencies it may use.

During 17 to 21 November, IARUMS reported a "strange, somewhat washed-out signal" about 7 kHz wide, that "drifted slowly back and forth" on 40 meters and below. The IARUMS Newsletter is available on the IARU Region 1 web site at www.iaru-r1.org.

SANDTON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB REPORT BACK

The Talking Tech Power Hour on 24 November with special guest, Eddie, ZS6BNE gave the net practical insights in to Rapidly Deployable Amateur Radio Stations, how RaDAR sport contests work, some tips on equipment and even apps to get your 10 or 12 digit grid square. A key takeout is that the number of deployments in a specific time period and the accuracy of the five contacts at each deployment point, are what really count, this is all tracked on a live logging system to enhance the competitive spirit. Thank you, Eddie, for motivating us to get out there and put an antenna in the air.

The SARC combined their year-end function with a fox hunt, museum visit, antenna build and an enjoyable braai on 28 November at the AWA venue in Observatory, Johannesburg. A really interesting and fun time was had by all

and now we have to wait another 12 months for the next one. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at moderate levels. There are currently a number of sunspot regions visible, and some flaring activity is expected. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around 61. The 10 to 30 m bands may provide some good DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a diary of some upcoming events:

21 December – the Summer Solstice at 17:59 CAT

21 and 22 December – the Ursids Meteor Showers

25 December – Christmas Day

26 December – Family Day

27 December – Public holiday

31 December – the end of YOTA month, the CQ DX Marathon and Bands Alive Ultra-marathon

01 January – New Year's Day, the start of the 2022 CQ DX Marathon and the SAMOC Straight Key Night

3 and 4 January – the Quadrantids Meteor Shower

12 January - the Inland schools open

14 to 16 January – the PEARS National VHF/UHF Contest

19 January - the Coastal schools open and the SARL Wednesday 80 m Club Contest

To conclude our bulletin, a recap of our main news story:

The President and Council of the SARL wish you and your families an enjoyable and happy holiday season and a New Year filled with peace, joy and prosperity.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans, if possible, by following the News Inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items to be included in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly radio programme, Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 CAT. The programme can be heard

on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band by courtesy of Louis, ZS5LP. A rebroadcast by Andy, ZS6ADY, can be heard on Monday evenings at 19:30 CAT on 3 620 kHz.

We welcome your signal reports, comments, and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za.

You have listened to a news bulletin written by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, proofread by Dave Reece, ZS1DFR and read by .....

From the News Team, a Blessed Christmas and best wishes for the week ahead.